Single visa travel for SAARC countries

1690. SHRI S.P.M. SYED KHAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any plan to introduce single visa travel for all SAARC countries; and

(b) the details regarding the efforts made by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) The Government has no plan to introduce single visa travel for all SAARC countries. At present, nationals of all SAARC countries are governed by the visa regulations of individual SAARC countries.

Major Non-NATO Ally status to Pakistan

1691. SHRI LALIT SURI: Will the Minister of EXTERNALAFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) Government's reaction to United States decision to give Pakistan the status of their Major Non-NATO Ally;

(b) whether the same has been conveyed to the United States, if so, their response thereto;

(c) to what extent India would be under pressure strategically *vis-avis* their neighbour; and

(d) in what manner Government propose to meet this situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IK THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) The Government has expressed its disappointment on the announcement by USA designating Pakistan as a Major Non-NATO Ally.

(b) The Goverment has conveyed its disappointment on this announcement to the United States. The Government of India also issued a statement in this regard on March 20, 2004. The US offered a similar status to India to which we have not given any consideration.

(c) The designation of Pakistan as a Major Non-NATO Ally has significant implications and we have conveyed our concerns in this regard to the US.

(d) The Government is fully seized of the matter and taking appropriate steps.

Indian, Brazilian and South African Foreign Ministers meeting

1692. SHRI LALIT SURI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Foreign Ministers of India, Brazil and South Africa met in Delhi in March, 2004 to discuss matters of mutual interest;

(b) if so, the topics of discussions during parleys and decisions arrived at, particularly with reference to the scope of three countries being members of enlarged Security Council of the United Nations;

(c) by when the Security Council is expected to be enlarged to make it more representative of world opinion; and

(d) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by Government to implement the decisions taken at the Delhi meeting referred above?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. The Foreign Ministers of Brazil and South Africa participated in the first meeting of the Trilateral Commission of the India Brazil South Africa (IBSA) Dialogue Forum held in New Delhi from March 4-5,2004, at the invitation of Minister for External Affairs. The Foreign Ministers adopted the New Delhi Agenda for Cooperation and Plan of Action. The Agenda for Cooperation provides for cooperation and coordination among the three countries in various multilateral forums with a view to highlight the concerns of the developing countries. The Ministers also highlighted the need for reform of UN Security Council (UNSC) which would impart greater balance and reflect contemporary reality and emphasised in this context the need for expansion in both permanent and non-permanent categories. In view of the diverse perceptions on specifics of reform of the UNSC among member States of United Nations, it is difficult to anticipate any particular timeframe. The Plan of Action details the action points agreed upon for promoting trilateral cooperation in various sectors in a timely and focused manner.